

Proposed Multi-family District & Specific Development Residential & Specific Development Variety Base Zoning Districts

Project Overview

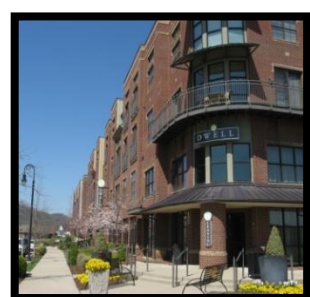
Franklin's residential growth has largely been defined by detached single family homes. As Franklin has emerged from the recession and continues to experience significant population growth, proposals for attached housing have proliferated. Rental apartments, townhomes, and higher density single family homes have been the trend. Currently, the only residential zone that can accommodate attached housing, aside from the mixed use zones, is the Residential Variety (RX) District. This zoning district does not have a density cap and allows almost any type of residential use(s). Applicants must go through the lengthy Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to gain City approval for any size project in this zoning district.

Working Group Established

A working group was established to address residential development issues and better plan for the range of housing projects that market forces demand. The City established a working group made up of an Alderman that serves on the Planning Commission, design and development professionals, and City of Franklin Planning and Sustainability staff. The working group began meeting together in February 2013 to review the RX zoning district, identify issues that repeatedly arise with multi-family development projects, and to propose recommendations. The working group met monthly, with staff meeting more frequently to discuss the ongoing project.

Purpose of the Working Group:

- Review residential zoning categories;
- Determine the effects of density caps (or lack thereof);
- Tie density to projects going through the PUD process;
- Determine where higher density residential projects are appropriate;
- Identify limitations and solutions for infill development (will address at a later time);
- Explore other means of regulating and encouraging desired density throughout the City;
- Offer the FMPC and the BOMA alternatives to current residential zoning categories



Issues identified with the RX Zoning District:

- RX is the only district that allows multi-family (except for the mixed-use districts);
- No density cap with RX;
- Density is not tied to the rezoning;
- RX has become a default base zone for large and small residential projects. Over half of all base zoning changes in 2012 rezoned to RX (6/11). This accounted for 181/245 acres that were rezoned. RX has become a default base zone for large and small residential projects;
- LSR is a static 10% for all RX properties. This is low compared to other zoning districts, especially in conventional areas;
- Many RX projects occur in conventional design areas which do not require transitional features;

Other related issues include:

- The Land Use Plan does not distinguish among the many types of “attached” housing and allows attached units in roughly half of Franklin (Figure 1);
- Gross vs. Net Density—City looks only at gross density so the density and intensity of projects can be deceptive;
- The mixed use zones require ratios for commercial and residential uses that are difficult to achieve and the zones have been rarely used;
- The City’s zoning ordinance is geared towards new greenfield development but the City is also receiving pressure for infill and redevelopment opportunities in Downtown Franklin and other mostly built out areas. The working group identified better accommodating infill and redevelopment a priority, but acknowledged that this should be addressed separately;

Working Group Recommendations:

Elimination of RX, MN, ML, and MR Districts

The proposed zoning districts will replace RX, MN, ML, and MR.

Establishing New Residential Multi-Family Zones (RM 10, RM 15, RM 20)

The working group recommends the establishment of by-right zoning districts for attached multi-family residential. The working group examined several different by-right zones and densities and recommends creating an RM10, RM15, and RM 20 units/acre.

The city does not want to break the character of Franklin by allowing too much density too quickly but the city must plan for growth and accommodate evolving housing needs. The recommended zoning districts originated from the density of existing developments, land use planning, market forces, and infrastructure availability. The common ground is to find appropriate density limits that meet the needs of the developers and City leaders.

The working group recommends channeling higher density development into the McEwen Character Area, especially along I-65 as depicted in Figure 4. Townhomes and less dense attached housing are appropriate in character areas shown in yellow on the map.

The City seeks to establish districts that will be used and feels this is a good range. If density is too low, the developers will simply forgo the by-right districts and rather choose to rezone to the (proposed) Special Development (SD-R/SD-X) Zone to be able to set and negotiate density, rendering the new zoning districts irrelevant. Allowing too much density will lead to sewer and water availability issues, traffic concerns, and loss of character and place.

Special Development (SD-R & SD-X)

Currently, all RX projects must go through the PUD process. With the elimination of RX, the working group recommends creating a PUD base zoning district that ties density to the rezoning. The applicant would request either SD-R or SD-X and discuss what level of density is appropriate for that specific area. SD-R would allow for the same available land uses as RX did only with the density added as part of the rezoning process. SD-X would allow for all of the same land uses that the mixed use districts allowed for without tying the developments to certain percentages for land uses (20% retail, 20% commercial, etc.).

Special Development (SD) Triggers (PUD Process)

- (a) An applicant may choose to initiate a PUD application for a project of any size.
 - (b) A PUD application shall be required for projects meeting any one of these criteria:
 - (i) The applicant intends to request a modification of standards with the concept plan or regulating plan application;
 - (ii) Zoned as an SD-R, SD-X, or CI District;
 - (iii) Proposed to use the TOD development standards of Subsection 5.3.10; or
 - (iv) If any corresponding triggers are met or exceeded
- A. Detached Residential or a Combination of Attached and Detached Residential projects containing the following criteria:
- 50 or more contiguous acres
 - 150 or more units

- B. Attached Residential or Mixed Use projects containing any three of the following criteria:
 - 15 or more contiguous acres
 - 200 or more units
 - 5 or more principal buildings
 - located at the intersection of 2 arterials or an arterial and a collector

- C. Nonresidential or Mixed Use projects containing any three of the following criteria:
 - 15 or more contiguous acres
 - 200,000 square feet or more of gross nonresidential building square footage
 - 5 or more principal buildings
 - located at the intersection of 2 arterials or an arterial and a collector

- D. Detached Residential or Mixed Use projects containing any three of the following criteria:
 - 15 or more contiguous acres
 - 200,000 square feet or more of gross nonresidential building square footage
 - 100 or more units
 - located at the intersection of 2 arterials or an arterial and a collector

Conclusion

The revisions to the Zoning Ordinance were brought to both the Joint Conceptual Workshop and the Design Professionals meeting to solicit any further input. The change to RX will put a cap on density that still allows for unique development while also protecting the City against unforeseen changes to density once the property is rezoned; as was the direction of members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

The mixed use districts were seldom used and the City proposed to make mixed use projects more attainable by removing the prerequisite percentages. The SD-X would allow more choices and options for a mixture of commercial, residential, and retail.

The inclusion of RM-10, RM-15, and RM-20 as base zoning districts allows the City to be on par with other cities of its size in having multi-family base zoning districts. The working group did numerous case

studies on peer cities to understand what cities of similar sizes had done. The working group also looked at the density of multi-family developments around Franklin to see what was already here.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact the City of Franklin Planning and Sustainability Department.